

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for sharing network access capacities between a master Internet service provider, comprising at least one point of presence, and a client Internet service provider, said method comprising the steps of:

- upon reception of an access request, including at least a subscriber identifier, [[a]] an Internet service provider identifier and a password, at said at least one point of presence:
 - determining, according to said Internet service provider identifier, if said access request comes from a subscriber of said master Internet service provider or from a subscriber of said client Internet service provider, said access request being rejected otherwise;
 - if said access request comes from a subscriber of said master Internet service provider,
 - determining, using said subscriber identifier and said password, if said subscriber is authorized to establish a connection; and,
 - if said subscriber is authorized, establishing a connection, else, rejecting said access request;
 - else, if said access request comes from a subscriber of said client Internet service provider,

- determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client Internet service provider; and,

- if a new connection may be established, sending an authorization request, comprising at least said subscriber identifier and said password, to said client Internet service provider, else, rejecting said access request;

- upon reception of an authorization acknowledgment, comprising said subscriber identifier, from said client Internet service provider:

- if said subscriber is authorized, establishing a connection, and sharing network access capacity across the established connection between the master Internet service provider and the client Internet service provider

- else, rejecting said access request; and

replacing said subscriber identifier and said password by a virtual subscriber identifier and a virtual password, associated to said Internet service provider identifier, when said access request comes from a subscriber of said client Internet service provider, before determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client Internet service provider.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining a duration of the connections established by subscribers of said client Internet service provider.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of determining a number of simultaneous connections established by subscribers of said client Internet service provider.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client Internet service provider is based upon a number of ports allocated to said client Internet service provider.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of determining if a new connection may be established for a subscriber of said client Internet service provider is based upon a connection time threshold associated with said client Internet service provider.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a RADIUS proxy, using RADIUS protocol.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said Internet service provider identifier is a realm.

9. (Original) An apparatus comprising means adapted for carrying out the method according to claim 1.

10. (Cancelled).